

Message Text

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REF: PEKING 1429

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TAGS: PFOR, CH, TW, US

SUBJECT: NANCY TANG ON POST-NORMALIZATION SUPPLY OF DEFENSE MATERIAL
TO TAIWAN

REF: PEKING 1429

1. JUST BEFORE LEAVING PEKING EVENING JULY 29 CONGRESSIONAL STAFFDEL
"RESOURCE PERSON" PROF. KENNETH LIEBERTHAL (RAND CORPORATION AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, SWARTHMORE) RELATED TO US SOME DETAILS
OF A BRIEF DISCUSSION HE HAD ON JULY 28 WITH TANG WEN-SHENG (NANCY
TANG) ABOUT THE ISSUE OF POST-NORMALIZATION ARMS SUPPLIES TO TAIWAN--
AN ISSUE ON WHICH HE HAD WORKED AT THE RAND CORPORATION. LIEBERTHAL
INITIATED THE DISCUSSION. TANG'S RESPONSE WAS PREDICTABLY
NEGATIVE.

2. LIEBERTHAL, LIKE OTHER STAFFDEL MEMBERS VERY TIRED FROM HIS
EARTHQUAKE EXPERIENCE, HAD SOME DIFFICULTY RECALLING FULL DETAILS
AND SEQUENCE OF THIS DISCUSSION. BUT HE SAID HE BEGAN BY REFERRING
TO HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT U.S.-TAIWAN TRADE COULD CONTINUE AFTER U.S.-
PRC NORMALIZATION, AND THEN WENT RIGHT ON TO ASK WHAT PRC'S
POSITION WOULD BE, IN THE PERIOD OF NORMALIZATION BUT BEFORE
THE LIBERATION OF TAIWAN, TOWARD TAIWAN'S RECEIVING
DEFENSE MATERIALS SUCH AS AMMUNITION AND SPARE PARTS. TANG
ASKED AGAINST WHOM SUCH MATERIAL WOULD BE USED. LIEBERTHAL
REPLIED TO THE EFFECT THAT IT WOULD BE FOR THE DEFENSE OF TAIWAN.TANG
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ASKED IF LIEBERTHAL THOUGHT SOVEREIGN NATIONS PERMITTED THAT SORT OF THING. LIEBERTHAL SAID NOT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE. TANG TOLD HIM HE'S ANSWERED HIS OWN QUESTION.

3. AT ONE POINT IN THE EXCHANGE LIEBERTHAL ALSO ASKED IF PRC OBJECTION WOULD BE "IN PRINCIPLE" (HE MEANT ACROSS-THE-BOARD), OR IF PRC WOULD DECIDE ITS POSITION ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. HER RESPONSE (APPARENTLY AGAIN A QUESTION ABOUT PRACTICE OF SOVEREIGN NATIONS AND THEN "YOU'VE ANSWERED YOUR OWN QUESTION") MADE CLEAR THAT PRC WOULD OPPOSE SUCH TRANSACTIONS ACROSS-THE-BOARD.

4. COMMENT: LIEBERTHAL APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE ONLY STAFFDEL MEMBER TO GET INTO THIS SUBJECT WITH THE CHINESE, BUT SOME REFLECTION OF THE DISCUSSION PRESUMABLY WILL APPEAR IN REPORT OF THE GROUP'S FINDINGS.

5. LIEBERTHAL REMARKED TO US HE FOUND IT INTERESTING THAT TANG HAD AVOIDED (BY USE OF RHETORICAL QUESTIONS) PUTTING HERSELF IN POSITION WHERE SHE COULD BE QUOTED AS CATEGORICALLY REJECTING POST-NORMALIZATION SUPPLY OF DEFENSE-RELATED MATERIAL TO TAIWAN BY THE U.S. OR OTHERS. ON BASIS OF HIS ACCOUNT, HOWEVER, TANG WAS IN NO DOUBT CONCERNING HER BASIC GUIDANCE FOR DEALING WITH THIS QUESTION: A PRINCIPLED TURN-DOWN AS AN INFRINGEMENT OF PRC SOVEREIGNTY.
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